

IDEA - 0246
Copy 5 of 5

6 April 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR : The Record

SUBJECT : Electronic Timers for [REDACTED]
Package Opening

25X1A

REFERENCE :

A. [REDACTED]
B. [REDACTED]

25X1A

1. Per the direction of the Chief, Development Branch, I discussed the status of the subject timers with the Chief, Special Projects Branch. From this discussion and the above references, the following is the present status:

25X1A

(a) The [REDACTED] testing program will be terminated in the near future and be declared operationally ready. If the subject timers are all judged to be satisfactory, TSD will be asked to purchase some number of them as an "on the shelf" capability which DPD could purchase as required; or if there is an immediate need of a number of the timers, the Materiel Branch will be asked to purchase them from DPD funds. In either event it appears that the Development Branch would function only to give initial technical guidance to the element making the purchase. In the interim period, the Chief, Special Projects Branch, desires that the Development Branch consider it an inactive but open project.

2. With respect to the actual function of the timers:

(a) Reference A. The times of 3:55, 3:53.5 and 4:08.5 for timers set to 3:51 given in the report are practically impossible. I, along with a group of qualified engineers, attempted to cause a group of timers to go off late and were unable to do so. The nature of the unit is such that it will go off with extreme accuracy if set up properly, not go off at all if a complete malfunction is experienced, or go off early if the batteries are low, certain wires are broken, or a minor malfunction is experienced. This being the case, I discussed the reported late openings with the Communications Engineer at Edwards who informed me that the reported late opening times in reference A were the times of sighting not

SECRET

IDEA-0246

Page 2

the times of opening. In the case of the 4:08.5 time, he stated that the bundle apparently opened behind a cloud and at 4:08.5 the timer recovery parachute was first observed under a cloud.

(b) Reference B. The two extremely early openings reported in reference B are entirely possible. The early functioning of the timer can be caused to happen although careful handling and proper battery charging should preclude such. Reference D points out that the timers had been used several times which could easily account for the malfunctions. The timers were made to be dropped one time only and their recovery and re-use while known to be questionable was attempted to hold down costs. These timers were made to furnish voltages for opening the package and (at a later time) self-destruction. Since this was the case the construction of the units was such as to allow destruction with a minimum of explosive.

SIGNED

25X1A

Distribution:

1-2-C/DB/DFD
3-C/SFD/DFD
4-DFD/DB
5-DFD/RI

25X1A

DFD/DE [REDACTED] row

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